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Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Financing arrangements for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the note by the Secretary-General on financing arrangements for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 (A/67/857). During its consideration of the note in advance form, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 22 May 2013. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Committee in its consideration of financing arrangements for UNDOF are listed at the end of the present report.

2. **The Advisory Committee considers that the note of the Secretary-General, as well as the explanations provided subsequently by the representatives of the Secretary-General, have not provided sufficient clarity and rationale to justify, in a transparent manner, the additional resources proposed in a number of areas. The Committee's observations and recommendations are outlined below.**

II. Additional resource requirements for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013

3. The Secretary-General's note indicates that during the current, 2012/13 period, in response to the deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, UNDOF has relocated its civilian personnel from Damascus to Camp Faouar, necessitating the construction of additional office and residential accommodation

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and the upgrade and enhancement of existing security infrastructure in the compound. In addition, the ongoing security situation has resulted in a change in the classification of the duty station, which has in turn resulted in the implementation of additional related entitlements for international and national staff (see A/67/857, para. 2).

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 66/276, appropriated an amount of $45,992,000 gross ($44,929,300 net) for the maintenance of UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. According to the Secretary-General's report, the overall additional requirements amount to $8,593,100, of which no more than $619,900 can be accommodated through the reprioritization of the utilization of approved resources for the 2012/13 period. The Secretary-General therefore proposes revised requirements for the maintenance of UNDOF amounting to $53,965,200 gross ($52,716,400 net) for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, which represents an increase of $7,973,200 gross ($7,787,100 net) compared with the appropriation of $45,992,000 gross ($44,929,300 net) approved by the Assembly in its resolution 66/276. The proposed additional requirements reflect an increase in the provisions for civilian personnel of $3,317,100 and for operational costs of $5,240,600, offset in part by a decrease in the provision for military personnel of $584,500. The Advisory Committee notes that during its consideration of the UNDOF budget for the 2013/14 period, it was informed that the Force did not project overexpenditure with respect to the total appropriation for the 2012/13 period.

5. The Advisory Committee recalls that, during its consideration of the UNDOF budget for the 2013/14 period, it was informed that the Force projected additional expenditure for civilian personnel in an amount of $3,940,000 in the 2012/13 period, which the Secretary-General intended to meet through the reprioritization of resources, and that if there were resource requirements that could not be met within the approved 2012/13 budget, appropriate actions would be taken, in a timely manner, to obtain funding through the legislative bodies (see A/67/780/Add.1, para. 11). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic had continued to evolve, and taking into account that no related provisions had been made in the approved 2012/13 budget for the additional entitlements for civilian personnel, it had become apparent that UNDOF would not be able to absorb the additional requirements within the approved 2012/13 budget.

6. The estimated additional requirement for civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 of $3,317,100 reflects an increase of 32.3 per cent in comparison with the approved apportionment. Under international staff, the proposed resources amount to $9,235,800, reflecting an increase of $1,682,100, or 22.3 per cent, compared with the apportionment, attributable to the approval of danger pay effective 1 June 2012 and to the reclassification of the duty station from "C" to "E" effective 1 January 2013 (see A/67/857, para. 5).

7. Under national staff, the proposed resources amount to $4,140,800, reflecting an increase of $1,475,000, or 55.3 per cent, compared with the apportionment, attributable to the approval of danger pay effective 1 June 2012 and to the special measures approved by the Office of Human Resources Management (see A/67/857, para. 6). The observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the denomination of the local salary scale applicable to UNDOF in the United States

dollar are contained in its report on the proposed budget for the Force for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (see A/67/780/Add.1, paras. 23-27).

8. With regard to general temporary assistance, the additional requirements of $160,000 are attributable to the proposed establishment of two temporary positions, of Senior Adviser to the Force Commander (P-5) and of Security Information Analyst (P-3), in the Office of the Force Commander, owing to the security situation prevailing in the mission area. The Advisory Committee recalls that it had been informed, during its consideration of the proposed budget for the Force for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, that the functions of the position of Senior Adviser (P-5) had been performed by a staff member on temporary duty assignment since November 2012 and that the functions of the position of Security Information Analyst (P-3) had been performed by an individual consultant since October 2012 (see A/67/780/Add.1, para. 31). Subsequently, these arrangements were discontinued and temporary positions were created. In this regard, the Committee was informed that the P-5 position had been filled since 22 April 2013 and that the P-3 position would be filled by the end of May 2013.

9. The Advisory Committee notes that it was not informed of the creation by the Controller, on an exceptional basis, of these temporary positions prior to its consideration of the note by the Secretary-General on financing arrangements for UNDOF in the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. The Committee was informed that, as it had become evident that UNDOF would not be able to absorb the totality of the additional requirement for the Force within the approved 2012/13 budget, the request for the establishment of the two temporary positions had been included in the note by the Secretary-General. **The Advisory Committee notes that the request for the P-5 and P-3 temporary positions for the Office of the Force Commander has been made on an ex post facto basis in the context of a request for additional resources for the Force. The Committee considers that the manner in which the requirement for the two temporary positions in UNDOF has been presented has been less than transparent. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to ensure consistency and clarity in the presentation of budgetary proposals and in the provision of explanations requested by the Committee.**

10. Upon further enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the requested additional amount of $160,000 for general temporary assistance had been based on a requirement for three months of salary costs and common staff costs in respect of each position. **The Committee does not object to the establishment of the two temporary positions from the actual date of their incumbency through the end of the 2012/13 period, and it therefore recommends a reduction in the related requirement for general temporary assistance of $41,000.**

11. **With the exception of its recommended reduction under general temporary assistance set out in paragraph 10 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the additional resources proposed by the Secretary-General for civilian personnel in UNDOF.**

12. The estimated additional requirement for operational costs for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 amounts to $5,240,600, reflecting an increase of 42.4 per cent in comparison with the approved apportionment.

13. Additional requirements of $4,287,600 are requested for facilities and infrastructure, which are attributable to (a) the upgrade of existing security infrastructure; (b) construction of additional office space and residential accommodation in Camp Faouar, in connection with the relocation of 110 civilian staff from Damascus to the Camp Faouar compound; and (c) the redeployment of 30 military contingent personnel from the logistics battalion to reinforce the UNDOF headquarters reserve company (see A/67/857, para. 9). Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with additional information on the requirements under facilities and infrastructure, which include the acquisition of prefabricated facilities; generators; accommodation equipment; alteration services; construction services; and petrol, oil and lubricants, as detailed in the table below.

Category	*Description*	*Amount (United States dollars)*
Prefabricated facilities	3 modular units and ablution units	863 300
Generators	4 generators for observation posts (positions 80, 60, 27 and 10)	230 000
Accommodation equipment	Air conditioners and bedding and other accommodation equipment	120 000
Alteration and renovation services	Installations for sewage and waste disposal	120 000
	Upgrade/expansion of Camp Faouar kitchen/dining complex	250 000
	Asphalting and repair of roadways after electrical and sewage works	120 000
Subtotal		**490 000**
Construction services	Provision of electrical power to the prefabricated facilities	100 000
	Construction of foundations for prefabricated buildings	50 000
	Replacement of existing outdated sewage and wastewater treatment plan	700 000
	Support for the additional infrastructure in Camp Faouar	1 200 000
Subtotal		**2 050 000**
Petrol, oil and lubricants	Provision of diesel to support 24/7 operation of generators	534 300
Total		**4 287 600**

14. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the upgrades to the security infrastructure involved the improvement of the perimeter walls and the installation of a closed-circuit television system, which was in progress. The Committee was also informed that, regarding the construction of additional office space and residential accommodation, the related prefabricated containers, generators, water treatment units and other electrical equipment had already been ordered using system contracts. Regarding the 30 military contingent personnel redeployed in August 2012 from the base camp in Camp Ziouani to Camp Faouar, the Committee was informed that Camp Faouar had not had sufficient office and accommodation facilities to accommodate the increased number of both military and civilian personnel. The civilian staff relocated to Camp Faouar had been living in converted office space, on a rotational basis. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that as at 22 May 2013, a total of 45 civilian personnel, comprising 25 international and 20 national staff, as well as 341 military personnel, were being accommodated at the Camp Faouar site. The Committee was further informed that

UNDOF had completed the conversion of office buildings into residential accommodations and had commenced work on site clearance.

15. It was clarified to the Advisory Committee that the total amount of $1,200,000 included in the table above to support the additional infrastructure in Camp Faouar corresponded to the requirements for the upgrade of the electrical system to ensure that all facilities, including the existing and enhanced security infrastructure, had a reliable source of electric power. The upgrade of the electrical system would provide for generators with fully automatic switching systems and the replacement of electrical wiring for the entire camp. Upon further enquiry, the Committee was informed that the requirement entailed the acquisition of two 1,500 KVA generators at a unit cost of $400,000; replacement cabling at an estimated cost of $200,000; and 10 distribution boxes at an estimated unit cost of $20,000. It was also clarified to the Committee that the main wastewater treatment plant in Camp Faouar would be refurbished, expanded and modernized to meet the relevant standards of the Department of Field Support. The Committee was informed that no major construction or alteration projects were planned for the Camp Ziouani site in the 2012/13 period.

16. **While the Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to provide the Force with suitable and secure facilities for its military and civilian personnel, it nevertheless questions whether sufficient time remains in the current fiscal period to expend the entire requested amount for facilities and infrastructure. Moreover, the information provided to the Committee did not provide a complete picture of the progress made or amounts expended in the implementation of the envisaged works. The Committee therefore recommends a reduction in the requested resources under facilities and infrastructure of $429,000. Should additional resources be required in the 2012/13 period under this heading, this should be reflected in the performance report. The Committee requests that the Secretary-General provide updated information on the status of the construction and alteration projects to the General Assembly when it considers his note on financing arrangements for the Force.**

17. Regarding information technology, the additional requirements of $9,800 are attributable to the acquisition of additional equipment related to the relocation of staff to Camp Faouar and Camp Ziouani, owing to the security situation (see A/67/857, para. 10). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the additional requirements related to the establishment and equipping of a backup or alternate site for the Command and Force Headquarters in Camp Ziouani, with the necessary information technology equipment, including videoconferencing facilities.

18. An additional amount of $460,000 is requested under special equipment to provide for the acquisition of binoculars and night-vision equipment to enhance the Force's observation capability in its area of operations in order to respond to changes in the security situation (see A/67/857, para. 11). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the additional requirements relate to the acquisition of six long-range, multifunctional infrared binoculars, which would expand the Force's night-time operations with a long-range visibility capability. Upon further enquiry, the Committee was informed that the high cost of the binoculars was due to the planned acquisition of a specialized observation system, as UNDOF required the recording of the images being viewed and the capability to

operate the system remotely from a secure location. The recording of images would allow the Force to document violations of the disengagement agreement and to report to the parties accordingly, without exposing the operator of the system to the danger of shell fire. It was indicated to the Committee that the requirement for the observation equipment had become an added priority owing to the significant deterioration in the security situation in recent months, which had resulted in a reduction in the number of mobile patrols that could be undertaken by the Force. Upon further enquiry, the Committee was informed that in fact the Force had acquired in prior financial periods a total of five long-range, multifunctional infrared binoculars, similar to those requested for the 2012/13 period, and that the current proposal was based on the unit cost actually paid for such equipment in the 2011/12 period. The Committee notes therefore that the proposed acquisition of observation equipment is actually an expansion of a system already in use in UNDOF. **While the Advisory Committee has concerns over the lack of transparency in this request, it does not object to the resources proposed under special equipment for UNDOF in the 2012/13 period.**

19. **With the exception of the recommended reduction under facilities and infrastructure in paragraph 16 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the resources proposed for operational costs.**

III. Conclusion and recommendation

20. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 are indicated in paragraph 14 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/67/857). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate and assess the amount of $7,503,200 for the maintenance of the Force for the 12-month period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, in addition to the amount of $45,992,000 already appropriated and assessed for the same period under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 66/276.**

Documentation

- Budget for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/67/705)
- Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the budget performance for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (A/67/780/Add.1)
- General Assembly resolution 66/276 on the financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force